MI Chapter 1

I really enjoyed reading about the eight different kinds of “intelligences” because I find them fascinating. While this chapter didn’t directly discuss multiple intelligences in the context of education, it is easy to see how it is so important to bring them into consideration when it comes to teaching. When we took the test in class to determine which intelligences were strongest for us, I scored highest in the interpersonal and naturalist categories and lowest in the musical and logical-mathematical categories. The results of my test make me aware that it might be difficult for me to connect to students who fall into different categories than I do at first, and this chapter makes me aware that I will have to be able to recognize these rather foreign intelligences in my future students, as I am sure that I will have students who are musically and mathematically inclined. I will need to be able to connect with these students just as well as I might connect with students who fall into the same MI categories as I do. Apart from the fact that Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences might pose challenges to me as an educator when it comes to discovering how to best suit intelligences that I do not strongly possess, I think that differing intelligences have much to offer to a classroom’s learning environment as I will be able to learn from my students and they will be able to learn from each other. This is a very valuable thing and I will be sure to make my best effort to get to know which categories my students fall into as individuals and to give them the opportunities to utilize those intelligences.

MI Chapter 2

This chapter encouraged me to think even more about which intelligences I may be “lacking” in and how I might be able to bring them into my future classroom despite the fact that I am not proficient in them. I really liked the suggestions that the chapter provided, particularly drawing on colleague’s expertise and the concept of team teaching (21), as well as asking students to help out (26). When I did a practicum course at my previous college, I was placed in a global literature class that was team-taught by an English teacher and a social studies teacher. Not only were they diverse in their areas of content and expertise, they also differed in terms of MI (as far as I could see, at least). For example, one of the teachers had a great deal of “naturalist” in her, which allowed her to connect well with a group of students who were crafting lobster traps for a service learning project. This particular group of students happened to be boys who had little interest in schoolwork and preferred to work outside as part of family businesses (some of which were in the lobstering business), but they were fully engrossed in the project with the guidance of their “naturalist” teacher. Another group of students worked closely with the other teacher, who happened to be a former cross country coach and was very kinesthetic, to organize a 5k for their service learning project. After reading this chapter and looking back, I can see even more of the benefits of having teachers with differing intelligences because it allows them to learn from each other and to connect to a larger range of students.

MI Chapter 3

I think that this chapter provides very useful tips and suggestions for determining the most developed intelligences of your individual students. I did notice, however, that some of the tips were more conducive to a secondary ed. classroom than others, and I will remember to focus more on those once I have my own students to observe. (I also think that our field experience for this class will be great practice for trying to guess student intelligences based on sole observation). I found it humorous but insightful when Armstrong says that “the one good way to identify students’ most highly developed intelligences is to observe how they misbehave in class” (34). I had never really considered how much there is to learn from what we might otherwise view as poor or unacceptable behavior, but now I am curious to see what kinds of crazy things my future students will do! I also really like the idea of using “choice time” as an opportunity to observe students’ intelligences, but the “choice time” Armstrong refers to is more prominent in elementary schools (I think). So, I began to think of ways that middle or high school students could show their intelligences through choice. In the English classroom, this could mean through the types of books they chose to read or how they chose to format a book report or paper. In terms of other suggestions that Armstrong provides for determining students’ intelligences, I think that looking at school records, talking with other teachers, and asking the students themselves are the best suited for secondary level.

MI Chapter 4

I really appreciated this chapter because I think it’s important for students to be aware of the different kinds of multiple intelligences. I cannot recall any of my teachers (in elementary, middle school, or high school) ever mentioning Gardner’s theory, but I truly wish they had. I think that a teacher can foster a positive and respectful learning environment by introducing the concept of multiple intelligences and having students partake in an activity that explores the different intelligences. If students understand that everyone learns differently and get the chance to “test out” activities related to the different intelligences, they will be more likely to respect one another and may even gain a greater sense of self-esteem. For example, a mathematically inclined student might realize that his peer who isn’t so great at math has a talent for music. If the class hadn’t been introduced to the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, they may not have known about one another’s intelligences or talents and maybe wouldn’t have recognized their own intelligences as valuable. I do think that the secondary ed. classroom is more limited than the elementary school classroom in its potential ways to explore multiple intelligences (at least based on the examples given in this chapter), but I definitely think it’s still possible and important to make students aware of MI at the secondary level. It would be great for kids to learn about them sooner, however, so as to promote respect for the different intelligences sooner in schooling, but I understand that that may not always happen and that they could and should still be emphasized at the middle and high school levels.

MI Chapter 10

Reading about all the different ways to assess student through MI theory was very enlightening, especially considering how everything seems to revolve around standardized testing these days. Like many people, I do not feel that standardized tests provide an accurate depiction of a student’s knowledge. And, it’s not all about knowledge anyway! Students also need to know how to use their knowledge. Testing via authentic measures allows students to use their knowledge in context, which is what they really should be getting assessed on. I think that the list of varieties of assessment will be a helpful reference to have when I am a teacher because one thing I certainly don’t want to do as a teacher is automatically resort to using the same assessment over and over again—especially written tests. I also really liked the idea about using student portfolios as means of assessment. Portfolios allow teachers to look at “the entire photo album” instead of single “snapshots.” For this reason, portfolios provide a much more accurate depiction of a student’s abilities than a single test ever could. And, I think that portfolios put much less pressure on students than having them sit down to take a test. If a portfolio is viewed as an ongoing product to track progress over time, then there is less pressure associated with each individual assignment. I really like the idea that “assessment experiences and instructional experiences should begin to appear virtually indistinguishable.” What’s the point of putting pressure and stress onto your students? This will only give them a negative attitude towards learning. I would definitely like to use portfolios in my future classroom.